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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE & RESOURCE MARKETING  
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## **2008 Division of Agriculture Animal Testing Policy**

The Division of Agriculture/Animal Health Section wishes to announce the animal testing policy for 2008. The testing that is conducted by the animal health staff is to ensure the health of the livestock in the state and to ensure public health when consuming animal products. Additionally, the testing performed allows RI origin livestock to enter out of state markets and livestock shows where the animals are promoted. There have been some necessary changes to the testing policy due to budgetary and staffing constraints. These changes have forced animal health to prioritize which types of animals are tested. The emphasis of the testing has always been and will continue to be commercial agriculture such as dairy animals, beef animals, hogs, and poultry. The Division of Agriculture has always been and will continue to be supportive of the improvement of the livestock in the state by testing 4-H animals and show animals, although testing of these animals will be of a lower priority than the commercial animals. Finally, non-commercial, pet type, or recreational use livestock may be tested, but only if time and budget permit such testing as this is considered the lowest priority.

### **Dairy Cattle**

Dairy cattle will be tested for tuberculosis, brucellosis, and Johnes disease triennially as part of the requirement of the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance. All currently milking cows and all dry cows will be part of the test although it is desirable to test all age eligible animals (all cattle over 3 months of age for tuberculosis and brucellosis testing and all cattle over 2 years of age for Johnes disease testing) to validate the entire herd as tuberculosis or brucellosis free. (Validating the herd will make interstate movement of animals from that herd easier by avoiding the necessity to test individual animals prior to shipment for a period of 12 months in most cases.) Additionally, animal health personnel would like to use this opportunity to vaccinate the animals against rabies if they are over 3 months of age.

### **Beef Cattle**

Beef cattle are tested for the same diseases at the same ages as dairy cattle are. All intact breeding animals will be tested for tuberculosis, brucellosis, and Johnes disease. Steers will only be tested for tuberculosis if under 2 years of age. Steers over 2 years of age will also be subjected to testing for Johnes disease. Rabies vaccination will be administered as described above under dairy cattle. Beef cattle will only be tested on an entire herd basis of all age eligible animals. Herds may be tested annually.

### **Hogs**

Hogs may be tested to validate a herd is free of pseudorabies and/or swine brucellosis. Up to 30 animals in a herd may be tested for the herd to be validated free. Herds may be tested annually.

### **Poultry**

The Division of Agriculture/Animal Health encourages all flock owners, regardless of size of flock, to have surveillance testing of their birds performed for avian influenza. Testing for this disease is considered a high priority of the division. A representative sample of large flocks will be screened for the disease and all birds in flocks under 15 birds will be tested individually. Animal health staff will also assess risk of exposure to that disease while at the farm. Additionally, testing of birds for *S. pullorum* may be performed if the producer desires to enroll or maintain enrollment in the NPIP. *S. pullorum* testing is considered of a lesser priority than avian influenza testing, but often the two can be tested for at the same time.

### **4-H Animals**

4-H show animals will receive medium priority for testing. Animal Health staff will make every effort to accommodate requests for testing of these animals as showing them promotes agriculture within the state. Priority will be given to those 4-H animals that will be tested as part of an entire herd test of all age eligible animals.

### **Other Animals**

Other animals not in one of the above categories will be considered low priority. Examples of these animals will include pet livestock or recreational use livestock. Owners of these animals are encouraged to hire a private veterinary practice to test them since limited human and financial resources are available through the Division of Agriculture/Animal Health section.

### **Important Note**

The mission of the Division of Agriculture/Animal Health section is to ensure the health of RI animals, ensure public health, and to promote agriculture. In the event of any emergency that could threaten that mission the above policy may change. In addition, it may change due to staffing or budgetary influences. All testing and rabies vaccination is currently offered at no fee to the producer. This policy may also change without notice.